

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 9, 2001

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Bush,

We want to commend you and your Administration for moving swiftly with a strong statement against Japan's expanded whaling program. On May 10, 2001, Japanese whaling vessels departed for the North Pacific Ocean to resume Japan's expanded lethal so-called "scientific" whaling program. The May 14, 2001 statement of Department of State spokesman Mr. Richard Boucher left no room for conjecture with respect to the United States' continued opposition to Japan's whaling program. Those of us in Congress who have opposed Japan's whaling program were very pleased that your Administration took this opportunity to reinforce the United States' opposition to continued whaling.

We hope that Mr. Boucher's strong statement signals your intent to oppose the proposed Revised Management Scheme (RMS), and that you will support ongoing adherence to the commercial whaling moratorium, established by the International Whaling Commission (IWC). By allowing a given number of whale kills based on unreliable assumptions, the Revised Management Procedure (RMP) would have the potential to drive certain whale populations back into dangerous decline. We also are concerned that certain nations have not fully disclosed their whaling activities. Moreover, we know that those same countries are not adhering to the IWC moratorium already in place. We know that once the RMS is combined with the RMP, some countries will campaign to drop the commercial whaling moratorium altogether. Given these concerns, and the fact that negotiations on the Revised Management Scheme have failed to adequately address a solid inspection and enforcement scheme, moving forward with acceptance of such a scheme would reverse the United States' fundamental opposition to the practice of commercial whaling.

Since it became clear that whaling had driven some species of whales perilously close to extinction, the United States has maintained a strong opposition to the killing of these magnificent marine mammals. Whale populations now face additional pressures, such as various forms of debilitating and toxic pollution, ship strikes, global warming and its effects on the marine food chain, and entanglement. Resumption of commercial whaling combined with these considerations could tip the scales towards the extinction of whales.

Again, we applaud you on Mr. Boucher's recent statement reproving Japan's expansion of lethal "scientific" whaling, and strongly encourage you to resist any advancement towards the resumption of commercial whaling including any movement towards the adoption of the RMS.